

Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 EB-08 COME-00 AGRE-00

/038 W

-----052591 021444Z /53

P R 021359Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 158

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW POUCH

AMCONSUL KRAKOW POUZH

AMCONSUL POZNAN POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN PL

SUBJ: HOARDING OF FLOUR AND OTHER COMMODITIES

REF: STATE 210078 (NOTAL)

1. THE GLOOMY OUTLOOK FOR THE POLISH HARVEST HAS CAUSED ACCELERATED BUYING AND SOME SHORTAGES OF FLOUR, RICE AND GROATS. REFLECTING CONCERN OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF HOARDING, THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS HAS ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE ASSURING THE PUBLIC OF ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF BREAD, WHEAT AND OTHER COMMODITIES OVER THE NEXT YEAR. A FRONT-PAGE ARTICLE IN ZYCIE WARSZAWY AUGUST 24 ACKNOWLEDGED SHORTAGES OF THESE COMMODITIES AND BLAMED THEM ON UNFOUNDED RUMORS AND THE TENDENCY OF POLES TO REACT NERVOUSLY TO ANY HINT OF INADEQUATE SUPPLIES.

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2. COMMENT: WE HAVE OBSERVED SOME SHORTAGES OF FLOUR IN WARSAW AND POZNAN, BUT MANY STORES APPEAR WELL-STOCKED AND LINE-STANDERS ARE NO MORE DISGRUNTLED THAN USUAL. THE GOVERNMENT APPARENTLY HAS BROUGHT ADDITIONAL STOCKS ONTO THE MARKET TO DEMONSTRATE ITS ABILITY TO SATISFY DEMAND AND TO NIP IN THE BUD ANY POTENTIAL HOARDING. ALTHOUGH ACCELERATED BUYING HAS OCCURRED, WE HAVE

NOT SEEN EVIDENCE OF LARGE-SCALE HOARDING. THE SEVENTH STRAIGHT WEEK OF STEADY RAIN AND CONCERN OVER THE HARVEST OBVIOUSLY PRODUCED SOME UNREST AMONG POLISH CONSUMERS. THE ONSET OF GOOD WEATHER DURING THE PAST WEEK HAS HELPED, AND WE BELIEVE ANY HOARDING WAVE HAS PROBABLY ALREADY CRESTED.

3. THERE SEEMS TO BE NO ELEMENT OF PRICE SPECULATION INVOLVED IN THE SHORTAGES, SINCE THE GOVERNMENT HAS REPEATEDLY EXCLUDED FLOUR AND BREAD FROM ANY PRICE INCREASES. NEITHER ARE THERE SPECIAL SEASONAL NEEDS FOR THE COMMODITIES IN QUESTION, AS WAS THE CASE WITH SUGAR HOARDING DURING THE CANNING MONTH OF AUGUST LAST YEAR. WE WILL CONTINUE TO WATCH FOR ANY EVIDENCE OF SUSTAINED SHORTAGES. END COMMENT.
BROWN

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Message Attributes

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